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Lackawaxen. The shriek of the "Piermont's" whistle terrorized the canal mules and heaped coals on the fire, but this was of minor importance compared to the havoc

caused by the blasting being done between Saw Mill Rift and Shohola. Here the hard feeling between the boatmen and the railroad builders flared into open conflict.

"Wild Irish" Labor

The Erie (as had the D. & H. before them) used newly imported "wild Irish" laborers who would rather fight than eat. It was alleged by the boatmen that the blasts were set off by the workmen only as a boat was passing and that as a result stones, roots of trees, and clods of earth were hurled across the river onto the passing boats.

The Erie side stepped the issue by denying that they had any control over the contractors and the D. & H. made several fruitless attempts to obtain injunctions against the contractors but the danger continued, in fact it grew worse and according to one account "violent personal attacks were made upon boatmen by laborers in which severe injuries were sustained by some of the boatmen." The situation became so serious that the women and children could no longer be taken on the boats and many of the men themselves refused to operate boats between Port Jervis and Lackawaxen. On June 3, 1848, a large party of railroad laborers waylaid a number of boatmen near Mongaup and in the fight which followed severe injuries were sustained by both sides. Some of the leaders were caught and imprisoned but the menace continued so long as the workmen were in that section of the valley and throughout most of the season of 1848 many boats lay abandoned while their captains and crews sought work elsewhere.

Larger Boats Built

In the meantime the work of enlargement was progressing as well as could be expected in view of the difficulties and throughout the length of the canal many boat builders were busy building larger boats to meet the growing demand. One of the first of these large boats to be built for the D. & H. Company was built by William Turner at Honesdale. Finished in October, 1848, it was launched in the spring of 1849, and, being 91 feet in length, 14½ feet wide, and 8 feet high, it was much too large for the canal at that time, so it was floated down the Lackawaxen and Delaware Rivers to Trenton, thence through the Delaware and Raritan Canal to New York Bay and up the Hudson to Rondout. (Those Lackawaxen raftsmen would try anything once). Turner himself, acted as captain.

Towards the close of the season of 1848, and in 1849, traffic on the canal was again on the increase and the locks throughout the canal were ordered to be kept open 18 hours a day, from 4 a. m. to 10 p. m. Some locks where traffic jams were most likely to occur, because of the short levels between them, were to be kept open all night. These were Neversink locks 55 and 60 and Lackawaxen locks 1 to 6. In addition, Creek Locks were given extra help.

Labor Troubles

One difficulty after another seems to have beset the company, and now with laborers still in demand, the boatmen continued their independent attitude and to grumble at every possible delay. Now, they complained, the loading facilities at Honesdale were inadequate, and caused many delays; consequently the company wisely continued the inducements previously offered but when, on June 25, 1849, cholera broke out at Rondout, the boatmen became alarmed and, when the plague spread along the line of the canal, hundreds of boatmen, lock tenders and other workers forsook the canal for work in far-away places where they would not be exposed to the dread plague. In fact, so many left their jobs on the canal that season that normal operations could not be resumed until the following year.

In the 20 years during which the Delaware and Hudson Canal had been in operation, the public had gradually come to realize that anthracite coal was far more practicable as a fuel than wood. All of the facilities of the company combined were not now sufficient to supply the demands of the expanding market so, when the Washington Coal Company, with coal lands in the lower Lackawanna Valley was organized, in 1847, the board of managers of the D. & H. at once realized that the business of this rival could be turned into an asset if the D. & H. could handle the transportation of their coal. Accordingly, an open letter

addressed to the citizens of Luzerne County was published in local papers. In it were set forth the "favorable tolls on articles reaching the D. & H. Canal by means of a railroad to be constructed through Cobbs Gap." There was, however, a joker in the offer, for the toll on coal was to be governed by the price brought by D. & H. coal at Rondout. At the same time consideration was given to the possibility of extending the D. & H. Company's gravity railroad to a junction with that of the Washington Coal Company at Providence, but this move was decided against, for the capacity of the "Gravity", even with its recent improvements, would not be equal to half that of the enlarged canal. In August,

1847, an agreement between the D. & H. and the Washington Coal Company was arrived at, but this agreement was still based upon the D. & H. Company's selling price at Rondout, for it provided that "\$2.50 shall be deducted from price coal brings at Rondout and one-half of the remainder shall be the toll per ton for that calendar year." BUT it also provided that "In case of an enlargement of the canal, the company (the D. & H.) may charge the toll at a rate per ton to be based upon an estimate of reduction of cost of transportation produced by the enlargement."

Unlimited Tolls On Coal

When we read this agreement we cannot but wonder whether or not the Washington Company signed "with their tongue in their cheeks" but as has been pointed out that while the charter of the Delaware & Hudson Company limited the toll charged on general commodities, the toll on coal was not so limited; hence they were within their rights in this agreement. Work on this new railroad, which was to be a gravity road, closely patterned after the D. & H. Gravity, was begun on March 28, 1848, and shortly thereafter the Washington Coal Company merged with the Pennsylvania Coal Company, assuming the name of the latter.

Among the names of the founders of the Washington Coal Company is that of John Wurts, who was then president of the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company, but he seems to have dropped out shortly after the consolidation of the Washington and Pennsylvania Coal Companies. Irad Hawley, a New York City engineer and financier, was elected president of the new Pennsylvania Coal Company and it is only fitting that, as the building of this company's railroad contributed so greatly to the growth of the town, which mushroomed overnight from a raftsmen's village of a few houses into a booming town, should be named 'Hawleysburg' in his honor.

Telegraph On The Canal

Another important innovation which was introduced along the canal during these fast-moving years was the telegraph, for in 1848 the canal company granted permission to an organization, out of which developed the Western Union Telegraph Company, to construct a telegraph line along its right of way. The line ran from Lake Erie following the turnpike through Owego, Montrose and Dundaff to Carbondale; thence along the right of way of the "Gravity" to Honesdale, then down along the canal tow path to Port Jervis, from which place it followed the newly completed Erie Railroad to the Hudson River.